

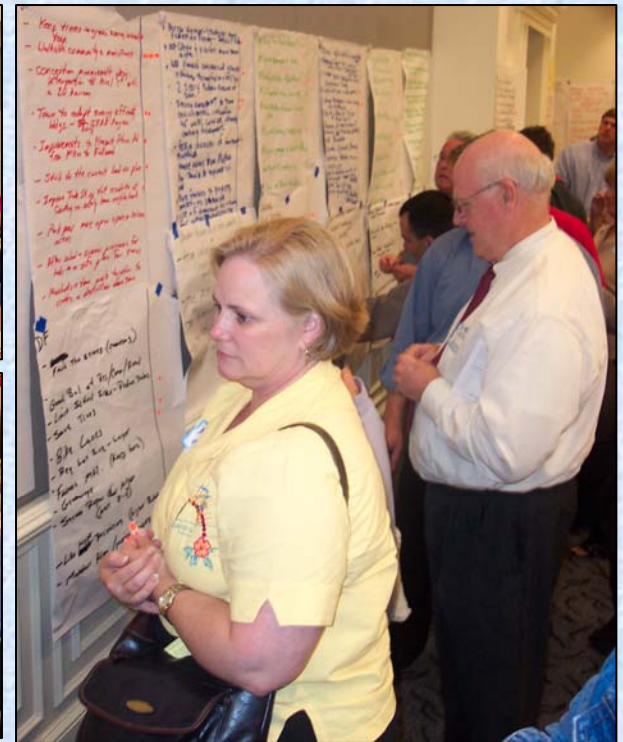
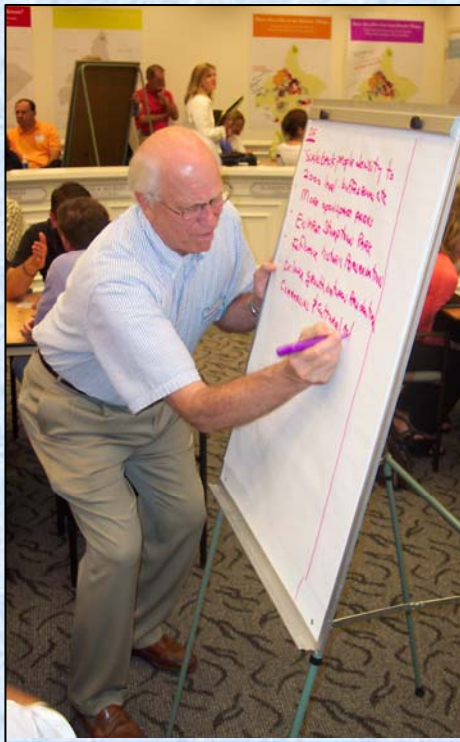
Our Town, Our Vision

Town of Matthews, NC



Adopted December 12, 2005

The following Vision Statements are based on public input received at a special Town Meeting held on June 7, 2005. In answering the question "What is your vision for Matthews?" some 260 citizens identified over 800 ideas, concerns, and issues. After the meeting, all the ideas were reviewed for common themes. These Vision Statements are written as if it is 10 to 15 years from now and we are looking back at changes that occurred as a result of the 2005 Matthews Growth Vision.



Vision 1. Small Town Feeling and Identity

Matthews has kept its small town feeling and identity, while continuing to grow. Attractive neighborhoods, a variety of churches, quality schools and an outstanding medical center make for a full service community. Above all, people feel safe and secure here. Streets in Matthews exude a small town charm—overarching street trees, attractive landscaping, understated signage, and wide, shaded sidewalks. Small parks and natural areas dot the community. Retail parking lots, once viewed as “seas of asphalt”, have been broken up, softened, and shaded with landscaped islands and perimeter buffers. Matthews has avoided “anywhere USA” franchise-style development. Instead, buildings, old and new, honor the 100-year-plus heritage of the community. New buildings are largely of modest height and scale, and are finished in traditional wood and brick architectural themes.



Our Town, Our Vision!



**Matthews
Growth
Vision**

Vision 2. Well-Planned, Functional Transportation System

A system of improved arterial roads, combined with traffic calming measures downtown, have successfully diverted non-local, commuter traffic away from downtown Matthews. These improvements were part of a comprehensive transportation plan, pushed through as a priority with State and regional funding. Trade and John Streets have especially benefited, and are now better able to serve patrons of downtown shops, restaurants and other attractions, as well as local residents. The character of these and most other town streets reflect a more pedestrian-friendly environment. A new mass transit service, with several stops in Matthews, provides a useful alternative for those seeking a stress free trip to and from Charlotte.



Our Town, Our Vision!



**Matthews
Growth
Vision**

Vision 3. Walkable and Bikeable Community

Matthews continues to work toward becoming a very walkable and bikeable community. New streets, as well as improvements to existing streets, are designed for multiple users (motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians) –according to the level of traffic intended. Most streets have sidewalks on both sides; many larger streets have bike lanes. Designated crosswalks are evident throughout Matthews, especially in the downtown area. In general, there is a high level of connectivity between streets, sidewalks, bikeways, walking trails, and greenway trails. Parking lots are also connected to allow shoppers to go from store to store without entering the highway. This continuous system provides for a multitude of driving, walking and bicycling alternatives. Cul de sacs are employed sparingly, in favor of fully connected neighborhood streets.



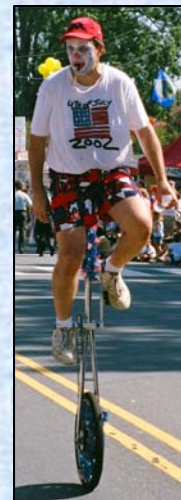
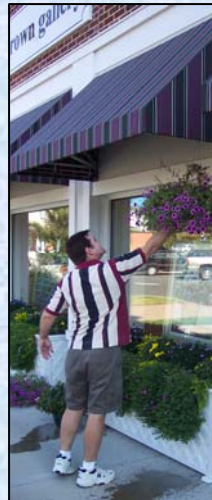
Our Town, Our Vision!



**Matthews
Growth
Vision**

Vision 4. Vibrant, Pedestrian-Friendly Downtown

Downtown Matthews has gained even more prominence as the social and cultural heart of the community. The downtown has become a true destination in the region, with a reputation for quality restaurants, quaint shops, boutiques and other thriving businesses. Sidewalks and streets are filled with people of all ages day and night, drawn by the historic character and beauty of the area, the human scale of its buildings and public spaces, and a constantly changing venue of arts and entertainment offerings. New, moderate-density housing at the edge of the downtown and in the upper floors of downtown buildings provides support to merchants and twenty-four hour security for downtown visitors. The Town government has been proactive in creating a physical, financial, and regulatory environment especially conducive to small business development in the downtown area.



**Matthews
Growth
Vision**

Our Town, Our Vision!

Vision 5. Extensive Park and Open Space System

As the community has grown, Matthews has steadily added to its system of parks and open space. Several larger park and open space areas have come about through advanced planning and property acquisition by the Town. Many smaller park and open space areas have been created as part of the Town's routine development approval process. Tools such as cluster development, open space incentives, conservation easements, and land dedication (or fees in lieu of land dedication) have ensured that new developments provide for their fair share of park and open space areas. In addition, an extensive system of greenway trails, primarily adjoining area streams, connects many schools, parks, open spaces, and neighborhoods in Matthews.



Our Town, Our Vision!



**Matthews
Growth
Vision**

Vision 6. Locally Controlled, Neighborhood Schools

Schools in Matthews have been planned well in advance of growth to avoid overcrowding and the need for mobile classrooms. Instead of building large, impersonal schools, new smaller schools have been located and designed to serve and be accessible to the local areas around them. Rather than functioning as single purpose “factories to educate children”, schools in Matthews, whether public or private, serve as true neighborhood centers, providing meeting space for community gatherings, recreational events and other functions. As part of this trend toward smaller, community-oriented schools, oversight of public schools in Matthews has shifted from regional governance to town governance.



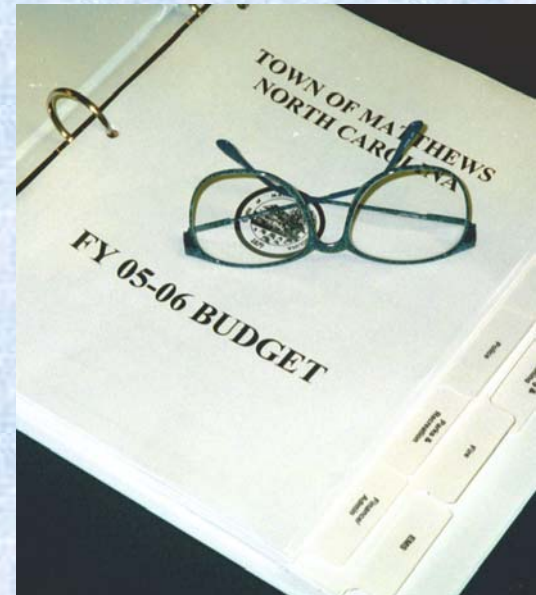
Our Town, Our Vision!



**Matthews
Growth
Vision**

Vision 7. Healthy Town Financial Footing

By facilitating compact growth and efficient development patterns, Matthews has continued to deliver quality municipal services for a tax rate below regional averages. In addition, the Town has been able to maintain a healthy balance of quality residential development and compatible commercial development—thereby affording the Town a favorable tax base. Impact fees and infrastructure improvements, paid for by developers, have been successful in offsetting the costs of additional infrastructure and services brought about by growth-induced demand. This has lessened reliance upon existing property tax payers to pay for growth.



Our Town, Our Vision!



**Matthews
Growth
Vision**

Vision 8. Firm and Fair Growth and Development Process

The town government of Matthews has continued to advance a firm and fair process for managing growth and development. Through its land use plan and development ordinances, the Town has set clear policies and standards to assure quality development. The Town enforces these standards diligently and consistently. The Town's development review process emphasizes effective communication and consensus among all parties, including the Town Council, the Planning Board, the Town staff, the developer, other Town advisory boards, and the public. The Town requires that necessary infrastructure, including especially adequate roads, schools, open space and greenways, sidewalks, and drainage, must be in place prior to the occupancy of the new development it serves.



Our Town, Our Vision!



**Matthews
Growth
Vision**

Vision 9. Balanced, Compatible Commercial Development

Town leaders have navigated a careful course, balancing the need for sustained economic development against the potential threats to the community from over-commercialization. Small, locally owned shops have been especially encouraged by a zoning and regulatory environment conducive to small business. Both small and large businesses alike have been required to take on development forms that blend easily into a small town setting and image. Previously vacant commercial and industrial buildings have been renovated and adapted for use as cultural facilities, retail enterprises, office and institutional use, innovative housing, and as small business development centers. Policies have been implemented to prevent indiscriminate abandonment and prolonged vacancies of “big boxes” left behind for “bigger boxes”.



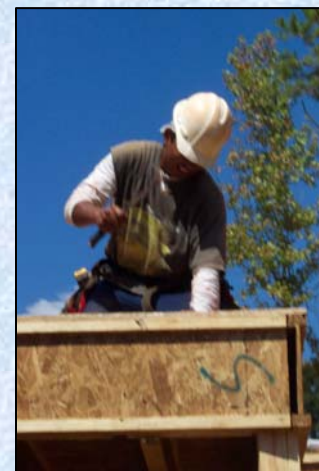
Our Town, Our Vision!



**Matthews
Growth
Vision**

Vision 10. Quality Residential Development

Matthews has remained mostly a low density, single-family residential community. Within this context, housing innovations have evolved to address two key issues: (1) traffic congestion and (2) quality affordable housing. To cut down on the growth in traffic, walkable neighborhoods convenient to appropriate, pedestrian-scaled areas, as well as transit services, have been favored over automobile-dependent, cookie-cutter subdivisions. The affordable housing needs of service workers, senior citizens, young couples, and others have been met through a variety of housing forms compatible with single family neighborhoods (rather than typical large complexes of apartments, condominiums or institutional housing). New and old neighborhoods alike are well maintained, having benefited from the town's strategic location, sustained economic prosperity, and overall quality of life.



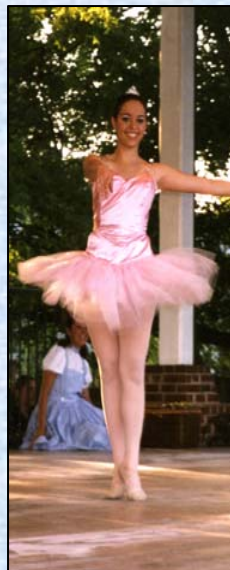
Our Town, Our Vision!



**Matthews
Growth
Vision**

Vision 11. Destination for Arts and Culture

Matthews has solidified its position as a major destination for arts and culture in the Charlotte region. Appreciation for the arts and culture begins with value placed on the unique heritage of the area, exemplified by the preservation of historic buildings and landmarks throughout the community. Cultural activities include a broad selection of traditional and contemporary art forms, festivals, concerts, plays, movies, sporting venues, and cross-cultural events. Young and old, as well as people from many ethnic backgrounds, are drawn to a constantly changing array of indoor and outdoor events. It is this great variety of offerings that has given Matthews an outstanding reputation in the cultural and social landscape of the region.



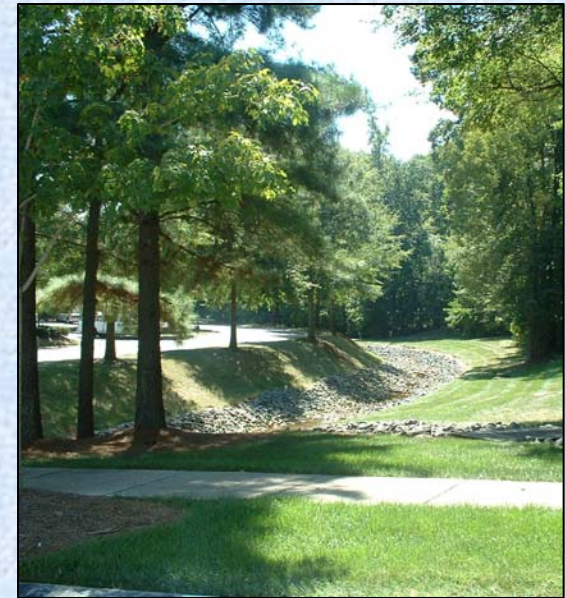
Our Town, Our Vision!



**Matthews
Growth
Vision**

Vision 12. Healthy, Sustainable Environment

In managing its growth, Matthews has worked to minimize adverse impacts to the region's air and water quality. The Town's growth policies and development standards have reduced automobile dependency; many residents of Matthews are able to walk or bicycle to most daily activities. Matthews' walkable neighborhoods and nearby services are designed to generate less traffic and require shorter distances to shop or work. Streams and drainage ways passing through Matthews receive less storm water runoff and pollution due, in part, to policies on tree preservation, landscaped parking areas, and vegetated buffer strips adjoining stream channels and roadsides. Solid waste levels have been substantially reduced through area-wide recycling efforts.



Our Town, Our Vision!



**Matthews
Growth
Vision**